



Date Approved: May 20, 2021

Addison County Communications Union District dba Maple Broadband

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2021

4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

VIA ZOOM

1. Call to order

Steve Huffaker, the Chair of the Addison County Communications Union District (“ACCUD”) dba Maple Broadband, welcomed the representatives of the Executive Committee to the meeting, and called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

Steve Huffaker, Chair, Ferrisburgh;
Nancy Cornell, Vice Chair, Starksboro;
Ellie Hagopian, at large representative from New Haven;
Magna Dodge, at large representative from Cornwall;
Dan Sonneborn, at large representative from Bristol;
Arabella Holzapfel, Treasurer, ex-officio representative from Ferrisburgh;
Adam Lougee, Clerk, ACRPC;
Cy Tall, Bookkeeper;
Robyn King, Minute Taker

2. Approve the Agenda

Magna Dodge made a motion and Nancy Cornell seconded to accept the meeting agenda, all members present consented to the agenda.

3. Previous meeting minutes approval - May 6

Steve Huffaker asked for a review of the May 6 meeting minutes, and there being no additional questions or edits requested, Nancy Cornell made a motion and Magna Dodge seconded to approve the meeting minutes for the May 6 meeting, and the motion passed unanimously.

Maple Broadband Member Towns

Addison
Ferrisburgh
Monkton
Ripton
Vergennes

Bridport
Leicester
New Haven
Salisbury
Waltham

Bristol
Lincoln
Orwell
Shoreham
Weybridge

Cornwall
Middlebury
Panton
Starksboro
Whiting

4. Operations Report

Steve Huffaker noted that there have been communications regarding the open position that was left by Jancy’s transition, and the potential need to add volunteers to existing Office subscriptions. Ellie Hagopian explained there was an Operations Committee meeting and it was acknowledged that there is a low volume currently incoming, and there have been a few members to volunteer to serve in Jancy’s previous capacity. Ellie Hagopian explained that the Operations Committee thought a good solution would be a rotation of volunteers serving this role each month to share the load as well as provide learning and engagement opportunities for those on the Committee so there could be a greater understanding of operations. Ellie Hagopian explained that the Committee wasn’t aware of the licensing constraints, and is open to solutions.

Steve Huffaker explained that they could increase their current Office 365 account to a new level of service, which may be good for future activity as well. Steve Huffaker noted another solution would be to use the intern for this role, although the intern is serving in a temporary capacity. Ellie Hagopian noted she was open to either solution, and she imagined Committee Members would be fine with the postponement of their duties for several months and it may give a good structure for the intern. Magna Dodge noted that it may be good to get a feel for the workflow of the intern, and pointed out that the intern would not be full time, but would be working for 10 weeks at 25 hours per week. Magna Dodge continued to note there were some marketing tasks that would be useful to have the intern support, and the intern had been invited to attend meetings for background and it may not make sense to have the intern fill the open role on June 1.

Ellie Hagopian confirmed that Jancy is still supporting the role, and that there was an Operations Committee volunteer that would be prepared to start in the near term, which could provide an interim solution. Magna Dodge noted that the intern would be serving in the capacity for 10 weeks, so there would need to be a longer-term solution. Steve Huffaker explained that either option would be ok with him, and Dan Sonneborn noted he would be supportive of what Ellie thought best as the leader of the Operations Committee.

Ellie Hagopian explained that she saw the rotation of volunteers to be the better and longer-term solution, and they could buy licenses as-needed given that it makes sense to test out this model. Ellie Hagopian explained that while this could be valuable

experience for the intern, volume has so far been so low that it may not be a very full use of his time. Nancy Cornell asked if they could create one Office 365 account that could be used by multiple volunteers, and Dan Sonneborn noted that this was not an option. Steve Huffaker explained an interest in getting things set up holistically to be efficient, and noted that they have had streamlined and effective decision-making thus far. It was agreeable to members of the Executive Committee that Ellie Hagopian move forward with the plan, and that the volunteers taking on this role be signed up for Office 365 accounts.

Ellie Hagopian explained that there was no activity on any of the forms in the past week. Ellie Hagopian reported that a subcommittee was looking into ticketing systems, but there was no recommendation yet and this would be continuing into upcoming months. It was confirmed that Cy Tall did not have immediate need of a Microsoft Office 365 Account, but that there would be one created for future use.

5. Marketing Report

Dan Sonneborn noted that he updated a PR Policy that was intended to be shared with the Executive Committee and the Full Board and this was based on LaMoille Fibernet’s plan. Dan Sonneborn noted that the plan was intended to consolidate communications to a limited set of people for representation, and that questions are directed to the appropriate personnel. Dan Sonneborn noted he would appreciate review and comment from the Executive Committee, and that there was an organization around topics and appropriate delegation for answering. Dan Sonneborn noted that there needed to be some decision-making on whether it made sense to decentralize these kinds of questions or keep it streamlined to one person for delegation.

Magna Dodge noted that she thought a single point-person was sensible, given her experiences. Dan Sonneborn explained there was a default to Steve Huffaker, but there could be secondary points of contact in the event Steve would be unavailable. Magna Dodge noted that systems orientation would be important for these conversations.

Magna Dodge noted that Dan Sonneborn explained he could use the intern support and she was interested in connecting to learn more about the workload. Dan Sonneborn noted that he could send documentation he assembled on intern responsibilities within the week. Adam Lougee noted that ACRPC’s use of the intern would be subordinate to Maple Broadband’s use, and that there may be overlap with GIS work. Magna Dodge explained that the intern seemed to have a strong relationship with GIS work and it



may be sound for Maple Broadband to redirect attention where needed. Steve Huffaker noted he appreciated the relationship with ACRPC to ensure that the intern had adequate work to do. Adam Lougee explained that ACRPC staff could help with GIS-related tasks, and it was agreed that the intern could share his knowledge of GIS with the Executive Committee as an onboarding. Adam Lougee noted that John Van Hoesen was taking on GIS general knowledge presentations for Selectboards and this could be done for Maple Broadband as well.

6. Financial Report

a. Grants

Nancy Cornell explained should be hearing back on the Rural Business Development Grant from the USDA for \$30,000 within the month. Nancy Cornell noted that a determination on the Community Facilities Technical Assistance and Training Grant from the USDA for \$150,000 would be delivered sometime between July and September. Nancy Cornell noted that a member of the Finance Committee was nearly done with the Walter Cerf Community Fund grant for \$5,000, and that member was doing an excellent job.

b. Treasurer Report

Arabella Holzapfel noted that there were no changes to report.

c. Other

Magna Dodge noted there was nothing to report.

7. RFP Updates

Steve Huffaker explained that there was nothing to report on the aggregate RFP.

8. Middlebury College Intern Next Steps

Magna Dodge explained they had secured an intern, Finn Hernandez, and encouraged Executive Committee Members to include him on emails or meetings relating to subcommittees so that he could get oriented. Magna Dodge noted that she and Steve had discussed including him on Executive Committee Meetings and Executive Sessions so that he could get a better sense of operations. Nancy Cornell noted that it would be important to have conversations with the intern on confidentiality, which was agreeable.

9. Potential Conflict of Interest

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Panton
Starksboro
Whiting



Steve Huffaker noted that if Members were on a Selectboard and on the Maple Broadband Governance Board and there are decisions on town-directed funding, if there should be a recusal. Steve Huffaker continued to note that an attorney had given an opinion that a recusal would be preferred in this instance, and he was planning on reporting this finding back to the Governance Board at the beginning of next month.

After a question from Nancy Cornell, there was a discussion on a communication from Rotary International that had been received by Steve Huffaker after a presentation.

10. Executive Session

Steve Huffaker moved that he found that premature general public knowledge of Maple Broadband’s discussions about the operating agreement and RFP status report would clearly place Maple Broadband at a substantial disadvantage because it risks disclosure of Maple Broadband’s negotiations strategy if it were to be communicated to the public, the motion was seconded by Magna Dodge and all members present consented to the motion.

Steve Huffaker moved to enter into Executive Session for a discussion regarding the network operator and RFP updates and other confidential matters under Title 1, Section 313, Subsection A of the Vermont Statutes which was seconded by Magna Dodge and all members present consented to the motion.

11. Future Meeting: May 20

12. Adjourn

Magna Dodge made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and the Executive Committee adjourned the meeting at 5:30 pm by consensus.

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